

Convention and give its advice and consent to its ratification.

George W. Bush

The White House,
May 16, 2005.

**Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony
for Robert J. Portman as United
States Trade Representative**
May 17, 2005

The President. Thank you all for coming. I'm pleased to congratulate a distinguished public servant, Rob Portman, on becoming our new United States Trade Representative.

It's an honor to be with Rob's dad as well as Jane and Jed and Will and Sally. Glad you all are here. It's always great when our Trade Representative has teenagers in the house. [Laughter] It helps him become a skilled negotiator. [Laughter] I appreciate the other members of the Portman family who have joined us.

I thank members of my Cabinet who are here. Josh Bolten, thank you for coming. I appreciate Peter Allgeier, who is the Deputy U.S. Trade Minister. Peter, good to see you, sir.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who came, David Camp from Michigan, Paul Ryan from Wisconsin—and Janna. I appreciate—I'm not through yet—[laughter]—

Audience member. I'm sorry, sir. [Laughter]

The President. —and Melissa Hart. Rick Lazio, former Member, thank you for coming.

I want to thank the Ambassadors who are here, diplomatic corps, *embajadores de Central America*, as well as other ambassadors—welcome.

Ambassador Portman will be carrying on the superb work done by Bob Zoellick. Under Ambassador Zoellick's outstanding leadership, the U.S. Trade Representative's Office has worked with Congress to pass trade promotion authority. We've completed free trade agreements with 12 nations on 5 continents. And those agreements will open a combined market of 124 million consumers for America's farmers, small businesses, and manufacturers. I want to thank all the men

and women at the USTR for the good work they have done.

Ambassador Portman is the right man to carry on this important work. He has a great record as a champion of free and fair trade. In his early days as an attorney, he specialized in international trade law. Throughout his time in Congress, he built a reputation as a steadfast proponent of the power of open markets to spread hope and prosperity around the world. As an Ohioan, Rob knows how much American farmers and workers depend on our export markets and how the expansion of agreements around the world can contribute to our economy here at home.

To advance our trade agenda, we have three priorities in the months ahead. Our first trade priority is to pass the Central American and Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement, known as CAFTA. That is an important priority of this administration, and it should be an important priority of the United States Congress. Last week, I met with the six Presidents from the nations. We all share an interest in prosperity for our people and peace in the region, and CAFTA gives us an historic opportunity to advance these common goals.

The agreement does four key things: It will level the playing field for American farmers and businesses; it will help our economy; it will make the region more competitive with Asia; and it will strengthen democracy in our backyard. At the moment, about 80 percent of imports from the region already enter the United States duty-free. Our market is open to the goods from CAFTA nations. CAFTA will open the region's markets of 44 million consumers to our goods and our services and our crops. CAFTA will also lower barriers in key segments like textiles. This would put CAFTA countries and America in a better position to compete with low-cost producers in Asia.

As it opens the Western Hemisphere markets, CAFTA will also bring the stability and security that can only come from freedom. Today, a part of the world that was once characterized by unrest and dictatorship now sees its future in free elections and free trade, and we must not take these gains for granted. These are small nations, but they are making big and brave commitments, and America

needs to continue to support them as they walk down the road of openness and accountability. By transforming our hemisphere into a powerful free trade area, we will promote democratic governance and human rights and the economic liberty for everyone. CAFTA is a really important piece of legislation.

Our second trade priority is to encourage the Doha Development Agenda now being pursued by the World Trade Organization. This new framework is the largest negotiation of its kind in history, and it would reduce and eliminate tariffs in key industry sectors and unfair agricultural subsidies and open the global market in services.

Finally, our third trade priority is to ensure that those who sign trade agreements live up to their terms. China's membership in the World Trade Organization has been a good thing for America. Our exports to China have increased 81 percent since China's entry into the WTO. When it joined the WTO, China also agreed to the rules of international trade, and it's in the interest of both China and the United States for China to abide by them.

One reason I selected Ambassador Portman for this job is because I know he'll work to see that our farmers and our workers and service providers are treated fairly. Ambassador Portman will work to ensure that China stops the piracy of U.S. intellectual property, lifts the barriers that are keeping our goods and services out of China, and demonstrates its commitment to transparency and distribution rights for our products.

America is a nation founded on the idea of open exchange, and free and fair trade is a win-win for all sides. By opening new markets, we'll increase prosperity for our small businesses and farmers and manufacturers and create jobs for American workers. By enforcing trade laws and agreements, we will ensure a level playing field for America's workers. American workers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere when the rules are fair.

Rob Portman is America's Trade Representative. He's also my friend. I know his integrity and his wisdom and his dedication. And I know he's the right man to carry out

our bold agenda at this important moment for world trade.

I want to thank you all again for coming. Congratulations, Rob.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:34 p.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Portman's father, William Portman, his wife, Jane Portman, and their children, Joseph "Jed" Portman, William Portman, and Sarah "Sally" Portman; Janna Ryan, wife of Representative Paul Ryan; and former Representative Rick Lazio of New York. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Ambassador Portman.

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma

May 17, 2005

On May 20, 1997, the President issued Executive Order 13047, certifying to the Congress under section 570(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104-208), that the Government of Burma has committed large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma after September 30, 1996, thereby invoking the prohibition on new investment in Burma by United States persons contained in that section. The President also declared a national emergency to deal with the threat posed to the national security and foreign policy of the United States by the actions and policies of the Government of Burma, invoking the authority, *inter alia*, of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.* On July 28, 2003, I issued Executive Order 13310 taking additional steps with respect to that national emergency by putting in place an import ban required by the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 and prohibiting exports of financial services to Burma and the dealing in property in which certain designated Burmese persons have an interest.

Because the actions and policies of the Government of Burma continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the